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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Today, on Abraham Lincoln's birthday, we remember some of the most powerful things he said about prayer. "I have been driven many times to my knees," he said, "by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere to go but to prayer. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day." When asked whether the Lord was on his side, he responded, "I am not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I—and this nation—should be on the Lord's side."

Let us pray. Holy, righteous God, so often we sense that same longing to be in profound communion with You because we need vision, wisdom, and courage no one else can provide. We long for our prayers to be an affirmation that we want to be on Your side rather than an appeal for You to join our cause. Forgive us when we act like we have a corner on truth and our prayers reach no further than the ceiling. In humility, we spread our concerns before You and ask for Your marching orders and the courage to follow the cadence of Your drumbeat. Through Him who taught us to pray, "Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven." Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator NICKLES, is recognized.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, the Senate pro tempore, thank you very much.

THANKING THE CHAPLAIN

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I want to thank our Chaplain again for a beautiful opening prayer and excellent way to start a day which I believe is going to be a beautiful day.

SCHEDULE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a lengthy period of morning business through the hour of 2 p.m. for a number of Senators to speak. Following morning business, the Senate may proceed to any legislative or executive business cleared for action. Therefore, votes are possible during today's session of the Senate. As always, announcement will be made as soon as any rollcall votes are scheduled. As previously stated by the majority leader, there will be no rollcall votes during Friday's session of the Senate. I thank all Senators for their attention.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 2 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for not to exceed 10 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Oklahoma is recognized to speak for up to 20 minutes.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, thank you very much.

HEALTH CARE QUALITY

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I want to make some statements dealing with health care. There has been a lot of discussion on health care and improving the quality of health care. Some of our colleagues have introduced legislation dealing with the quality of health care.

I think that is important. But I think it is also very important that we actually improve quality, not improve the number of regulations.

Today, Mr. President, Americans enjoy the highest quality of health care in the world.

In 1993, President Clinton proposed a plan that would have devastated health care quality. It would have limited the amount of health care that Americans could receive by limiting the amount of money, whether private or public, that could be spent on health care services. It would require that everyone have the same one-size-fits-all package of health insurance benefits. And it would have enrolled everyone in managed care plans.

Had President Clinton had his way, Americans would now be trapped in a health care system with the efficiency of the post office and the compassion of the IRS at Pentagon prices. The Republicans led the fight against President Clinton's health care plan because we believe Americans deserve the best. We believed it then and we believe it today.

Now President Clinton wants to lead an assault on private managed care plans. The man who wanted to put everyone in an HMO now wants the Government to wage war on HMOs. That is a pretty dramatic change. But one thing has not changed: President Clinton still wants Government-run health care. As he said to the Service Employees International Union less than 5 months ago regarding his rejected universal health care program:

If what I tried before won't work, maybe we can do it another way. That's what we've tried to do, a step at a time, until we eventually finish this.

President Clinton is now attempting to impose on you his newest attempt at Government-run health care and masking his efforts with the name "quality."

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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